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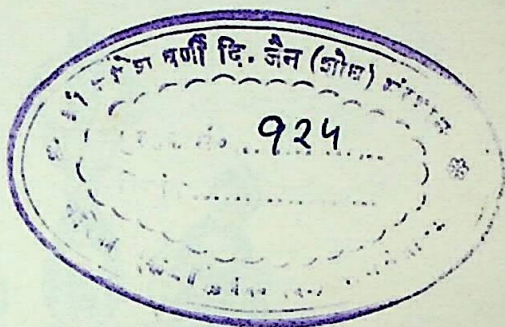
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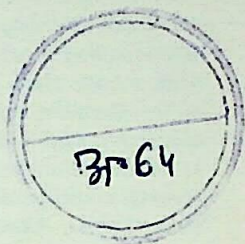
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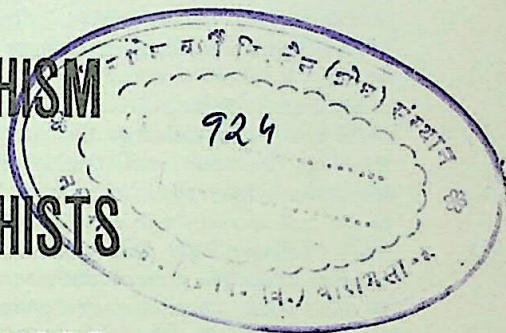
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NIKOLAI YERMOSHKIN

**BUDDHISM
AND
BUDDHISTS
IN
THE USSR**



**Novosti Press Agency Publishing House
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I recall a frosty December day in 1959, the editor calling me, then quite a young correspondent, to his office and offering me a chance to fly to Buryatia with a delegation of Nepalese Buddhists who had come to the USSR as guests of Soviet fellow-believers. I cannot say that the idea of a winter visit to Siberia, famous for its severe frosts, filled me with enthusiasm. However, discipline and curiosity took the upper hand. I borrowed a tulup¹ from a friend of mine, a "Reporter" tape-recorder from the central radio studios and some hours later found myself in Ulan-Ude, the capital of Soviet Buryatia...

Thus it was that I met with Buddhism and Buddhists for the first time. Six years have passed since then and I still have no desire to part with this subject which I find extremely interesting. I have written dozens of reports of my interviews with Soviet Buddhists and their guests from abroad, visited Buryatia, India and China, talked to the leaders of Soviet, Nepalese, Burmese and Ceylonese Buddhists, learnt many interesting things from Soviet orientalists and specialists in Buddhism (particularly from Professor Yuri Roerich), and at last sat down to write the present brochure at the request of the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House.

What can I offer the reader? Only a truthful and detailed account of how Buddhism penetrated into the territory of the Soviet Union, of the religious and secular life of Soviet Buddhists; of Russian and Soviet scientists who devoted their lives to the study of the culture and philosophy of Buddhism and of the friendly ties that exist between the Buddhists of the USSR and their fellow-believers in Asian countries.

¹ A long goatskin overcoat worn by Russian peasants.





A LITTLE HISTORY

Buddhism as a religious and philosophic system began to spread in the territory now occupied by the Soviet Union in the first century A. D. This was a time when it was being widely disseminated in Central Asia through which ran the "great silk road."¹

Buddhism first penetrated into ancient Khorezm. Gradually large centres of Buddhist culture grew on the vast area between the Caspian and Aral seas and the Pacific Ocean. These centres enjoyed deserved recognition in the cultural world of Asia of these times.

At the beginning of the Middle Ages Buddhist monasteries were built in most of the large cities of Central Asia. An old manuscript describes the restoration of Buddhist temples in Samarkand in the middle of the 7th century A. D. The Buddhist cultural centres in Kucha and Khotan were very popular. Scientists used to come to Khotan in search of rare Indian manuscripts that could not be found in India.

Until recently the only information concerning Buddhism in Central Asia was some brief notes made by ancient travellers and numerous pictures of the Buddha on rocks.

In Soviet times systematic archaeological investigation has resulted in the discovery of numerous monuments of Buddhist culture such as ruins of ancient temples, schools, sculptures and fragments of frescoes.

Fragments of stone statues of the Buddha made after the style of Gandhari were found near the town of Termez.

¹ The name given to the caravan route leading from China to Middle Asia.

Some years later the ruins of a Buddhist temple with bronze lions were discovered on the same site.

The green valley of the River Chu in Northern Kirghizia proved to be particularly rich in monuments of ancient Buddhist culture. Near the ancient city of Dzhul scientists discovered a whole monastery with numerous cells in which Buddhist hermits had lived, while in a small chapel—*chaitya*—situated nearby pieces of statuary and fragments of Buddhist religious paintings were found.

The spread of Buddhism over Central Asia not only influenced the spiritual life of the population, but it was vividly reflected in the art of the peoples, among whom it found many adherents. Along with the Buddhist teachers came craftsmen who built temples and monasteries, skilful sculptors and carvers who made statues of the Buddha following classical Indian models, painters who covered the walls with murals showing famous cave temples known throughout the Buddhist world.

While carrying out excavations to the north of Bairam-Ali, in Turkmenia, archaeologists found an ancient Buddhist shrine and a clay vessel with an ornament on it. The vessel contained stone statuettes of the Buddha, Persian coins of the epoch of the Sassanids relating to the 5th century A.D. and a pile of pressed palm leaves. At the Leningrad Department of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia the palm leaves that had been lying in the vessel for about 1,500 years were restored. The find proved to be extremely valuable. The palm leaves bore one of the oldest of Buddhist manuscripts relating to the 5th century

A. D. It is written in Brahmi by a skilled calligrapher. The text is taken from that section of the Buddhist canon which contains rules for monks.

Soviet archaeologists have so far found in Central Asia more than twenty monuments of Indian Buddhist literature written in Kharoshti and Brahmi. Several Buddhist centres have been discovered in recent years in Central Asia: in Semirechye (Ak-Beshi and the Krasnorechensk site), in the valley of Fergana (Kuva), in South Tadjikistan (Adzhina-Tepe) and some other places. It is evident that Buddhism was widely spread on the territory of Soviet Central Asia at the beginning of our era.

During the 7th-9th centuries Buddhism gradually disappeared from Central Asia under the pressure of Islam. In the western parts of Central Asia and the Tarim basin conversion to Islam ensued somewhat later, in the 10th-14th centuries.

Buddhism for the second time appeared in the western part of Central Asia and the basin of the lower Volga in the 13th-14th centuries, after the Mongolian invasion. Many of the Mongolian khans were Buddhists.

It appeared for the third time during the 17th-18th centuries together with the Oirats—a West-Mongolian people. In 1620 the Hoshut prince Baibagas-Baatar adopted Tibetan Buddhism (the so-called Yellow Faith).

In the period 1628-30 West Mongolians came to the shores of the Volga and brought Buddhism along with them. However no large monastic centre appeared in the Povolzhye steppes and the Kalmyk monasteries that existed were

of only a nomadic type. Buddhist teachings were brought to the Black Sea coast by Turanian nomads.

Almost simultaneously Buddhism appeared in East Siberia, in the Baikal region. It began to spread among the Buryat nomads about 1712 when 150 Tibetan Buddhist monks came to the district. There is a version that the Buryat steppes were also visited in the 18th century by Indian pilgrims—Sadhu. Such visits also occurred in Mongolia, where, in the monastery of Gandan in Ulan-Bator, they still keep the staff and monastic cup of a pilgrim from far-away India.

The first Buddhist monastery in Buryatia, the Tsongol dazan, was built in the Selengin district in 1741.

It is interesting to note that the first Buddhist temple in an European capital was that built in St. Petersburg in 1914.

Such is the brief history of how Buddhism spread on the territory now occupied by the Soviet Union. At present Buddhism as a religious teaching exists only in Siberia. The religious life of Soviet Buddhists will be dealt with in the next chapter.





BUDDHISM IN THE USSR

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An erroneous view exists that since the Soviet state is headed by Communists, there is no freedom of religion. This is absolutely wrong. Most Soviet people have atheistic views, but at the same time, every citizen of the USSR may profess any faith he chooses, and a number of religious beliefs are practised which is quite natural in a country of so many nations.

The majority of believers belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, which has the greatest number of places of worship. The Islam comes second in this respect. There are also societies of Catholics, Buddhists, Lutherans and others.

All the churches and faiths in the Soviet Union irrespective of the number of believers, clergy and meeting-houses enjoy equal rights among themselves and before the state. As early as 1918, the Soviet Government, considering the national and religious peculiarities of the citizens, eliminated the domination of the Orthodox Church. The Constitution of the USSR guarantees all citizens freedom of conscience and performance of religious rites. Soviet law prohibits persecution for religious beliefs as well as any offence to the feelings of believers. The state demands only one thing: that the religious organizations respect the existing laws and do nothing to infringe them.

Buddhism in the Soviet Union is professed by part of the population of the Buryat Autonomous Socialist Republic, in the Aginsk National District of the Chita Region, in the Buryat National District of the Irkutsk Region—in short by the Buryats inhabiting East Siberia. Buddhism is also widespread in the

Tuva and Kalmyk Autonomous Republics. Temples built by Soviet Buddhists resemble those of Mongolia and Tibet. There are not many Buddhist temples in the Soviet Union, fewer than, for instance, in Burma. This has its historical reasons. In the first place, Buddhism began to spread over the territory of Buryatia only two and a half centuries ago, much later than in other Buddhist countries. The magnificent monuments found in India, Burma, Nepal, Cambodia, Thailand and Ceylon were built over a period of 2,500 years. Secondly, much depends on the mode of life of the believers. The majority of Soviet Buddhists are former nomads. Only during the years of Soviet power were conditions created enabling them to lead a settled life. And, lastly, there are considerably fewer Buddhists in the Soviet Union than in other countries. All this, naturally, has influenced the building of Buddhist monuments.

Nevertheless there are Buddhist temples and monasteries in the Soviet Union that are more than two hundred years old.

Recently I visited Buryatia, a mountainous land in Siberia on the shores of Baikal, the deepest lake in the world. One day I decided to see the Buddhist monastery at the Srednaya Ivolga settlement. I had been invited to visit it by Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboyev, head of the Soviet Buddhists, during an interview he had given me in Moscow after the World Congress of Buddhists in Sarnath.

The Ivolga Buddhist monastery, or dazan, as Buddhist temples are called here, is situated some forty kilometres from Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Repub-

lic, in a beautiful lonely valley with a background of snow-capped green mountains.

A monk in a yellow gown met us at the gates of the monastery. Probably he had seen our car from afar. Without asking who we were or what we wanted, he hospitably flung the gates open. I, however, wanted to explain why we had come and asked him to inform Gomboyev of my arrival. The monk replied that every newcomer was a welcome visitor at the monastery and promised to inform the Bandido-Khambo Lama (the title of the head of the Buddhists in the USSR).

The monastery settlement consists of some 30-35 buildings with two brightly painted temples in the centre. In the *dazan* are many stupas very much like those built by Buddhists in South and South-East Asia.

It was early morning but there were already many people in the *dazan*. We were told that the majority of believers had come several days before to take part in the New Year festivities which Soviet Buddhists celebrate according to the lunar calendar. The service usually continues for several days. During the religious ceremonies the Buddha's sutras are read, odes and hymns in his honour are sung and sermons preached. The service usually starts early in the morning and ends late at night, with several short breaks during the day.

Those wanting to stay in the *dazan* for some time can put up at the large two-storey hotel. If no accommodation is available at the hotel believers can stay at the lamas' houses. The 30 monks at the Ivolga monastery live in separate

houses belonging to the Central Theological Administration of the Buddhists of the USSR.

A large building has been given over to the library which is widely used by Buryat scholars of Buddhism. The library contains such a great number of holy books that it too has become an object of worship. It has many rare manuscripts and xylographies from Tibet, Mongolia, India and China. It also possesses the 108 volumes of *Gandjur* and 225 volumes of *Dandjur* which form the complete works of the *Tripitaka*.

Of great value are the 21 volumes of the 5th Dalai Lama's works, as well as the works of Tsongkhapa, the founder of the "Yellow-hat" sect of Buddhists. Among other interesting books there are many volumes by Taranatha, the famous Indian historian and philosopher, and those of Gunchen Zhamyan Shadba, the founder of the system of philosophical education in the Buddhist monasteries of Tibet, Mongolia and Buryatia. The books themselves, mostly xylographies bound in yellow and brown silk, are very colourful. Modern books are also available. The monks collect all the literature on Buddhists and Buddhism that is published in the USSR. They have Doctor Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy* and *Dhammapada* in Russian translations.

When I left the library I went to the temples. Buryat craftsmen built them during 1945-47. Services were held simultaneously in both and all the thirty monks, including Bandido-Khambo Lama and the prior of the Ivolga monastery participated in them. Some of the worshipers after praying in one temple

went to the other. The weather was extremely cold,—40°C, but the believers took off their caps and prayed before every stupa on their way from one temple to the other. They also took off their caps and read a prayer before entering the temple.

As I have already said, a big service was held that day in honour of the New Year and the Buddha's enlightenment. I asked to have the words of the prayer read by the monks that morning translated for me. Here is the text: "All visible and invisible beings, both those who are close to me and those who are far away, be happy, and let everything that exists be joyful! Do not harm or despise each other. Do not wish any evil to others. In the way that a mother sacrifices her life to save her child, you must love all living beings. Wherever you are, brothers, remember the wise Buddha and you will have neither fear nor doubts."

The prayers were sometimes accompanied by music which, to my mind, is very like that performed in the Buddhist monasteries of Nepal and Tibet. The hall, where services are held, is decorated with numerous pictures and statues of the Buddha, of Maidari, Tsongkhapa and other gods of the Buddhist pantheon. "Sansaren-Khurde" ("Wheel of Life"), colourful silk bands with pictures from the Buddha's life, hang from the ceiling. On the outside the temples are decorated with wood-carving and painted in the traditional Buddhist colours—yellow and brown.

As the head of the Buddhists was engaged in the religious ceremony, I had to wait till it ended. At two sharp the monks finished the service and went

home. It was a picturesque spectacle which particularly delighted the photographer who accompanied me. And indeed, the lamas with their yellow and brown capes over their shoulders against a background of sparkling white snow looked very picturesque.

I was invited to the house where the office of the Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR was situated. Gomboyev greeted us with a kind smile and a shower of questions. He inquired whether I was pleased with the trip, if what I saw corresponded to what I had imagined, whether I liked Buryatia, etc. During the cordial conversation I asked the head of Soviet Buddhists to tell me of the relations between the Buddhist church and the Soviet state. Here is what he said:

"There are many different religions and sects in our country and they all enjoy equal rights among themselves and before the state. The Soviet state grants its citizens freedom of conscience. This right is put down in the Constitution of the USSR and is observed by all authorities.

"As for our relations, I mean the relations between the state and the church, I consider them perfect. We deeply respect and support the Soviet system which has as its object the happiness and prosperity of the people. We wish it every success. Here are some facts that show that freedom of religion is strictly observed and respected in the USSR. Elections to the organs of state power are held in the Soviet Union at fixed dates. The monks of our dazan along with all the other people have the right to vote and take part in the elections.

Recently a new highway was laid to our dazan. The Soviet state is paying for the repairs to the Gusinoozersk Buddhist temple which is a historical monument. At our request electricity has been installed in our monastery. We often ask the state organizations to give us trucks to transport fuel to the monastery and we have never been refused. These examples give a very true picture of our relations with the state." I asked the esteemed Bándido-Khambo Lama to tell me how the Buddhist community in the USSR is supported and about its structure. He told me the following:

"We live on the donations of the believers and have never been short of funds. As for the structure of our organization, I can say that it is built on democratic principles. The Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR which heads all the Buddhists in the Soviet Union is elected by a general meeting of the clergy and believers. The Administration directs the religious life of the Buddhists. All the Buddhist temples, monasteries, meeting-houses and other property are under the control of the Administration.

"At the head of each monastery there is a prior and a council of believers also elected by general meetings."

My next question concerned religious holidays marked by Soviet Buddhists. Gomboyev said:

"Buddhists living in the Soviet Union solemnly mark six important occasions called khurals. Five of these are devoted to the memory of the Buddha while one is devoted to the famous Buddhist reformer Tsongkhapa. His name is connected with the dissemination of Budd-

hism on the territory inhabited at present by the majority of Buddhists in the USSR.

"Our most solemn holiday is the Zagan-Sara Khural, or 'holiday of the white moon.' According to the Buddhist calendar this is the beginning of the New Year. Zagan-Sara is the first spring month of the Buddhist lunar calendar of the Mahayana trend. The holiday is devoted to the memory of the great Buddha. During Zagan-Sara every believer is cleared of his sins and acquires better qualities for the next year.

"The Buryats, the Kalmyks, the Tuvinians and other believers professing Buddhism start preparing for the festivities long before the holidays. They decorate their dwellings with carpets, embroidery and flowers, make the streets look festive too, prepare new clothes. The Zagan-Sara holidays last 15 days. On the first day of the 'white moon' believers begin to gather in the temples and monasteries. The holidays open with a sidar, a solemn service in which the prior of the monastery, all the clergy and believers take part. After the sidar all the lamas and parishioners greet the 'shiretui,' the prior of the temple, and present him with their gifts—khadakas (specially made bands decorated with rich ornaments). The presentation of gifts marks the beginning of the New Year.

"The doors of the believers' houses are hospitably open during the Zagan-Sara holidays. Each guest is met with words of cordial welcome, wishes of happiness and prosperity in the New Year and is invited to take part in the festive meal.

"Besides the holidays the lamas and believers take part in the daily services held at the monasteries and temples. Sermons and morals are read regularly there and religious rites performed. It is also the lamas' duty to visit from time to time remote districts where there are no big temples or monasteries."

I interrupt my interview here to say a few words about Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboyev. He is about seventy, a Buryat by birth, and has devoted all his life to the Buddhist faith. When he was twelve years old his parents sent him to a monastery. At twenty the clerical title of gebsha was conferred on Gomboyev and later, that of gabzha. For a long time Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboyev was prior at the Aginsk Buddhist monastery. He reached the summit of his clerical career in 1963 when the Buddhist Council elected him Chairman of the Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR. At present he lives in the Ivolga Buddhist monastery among common monks sharing their joys and sorrows. A profound scholar of the history and philosophy of northern Buddhism, Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboyev enjoys great prestige among Soviet Buddhists. He is well known and respected in the Buddhist countries of Asia and is a member of the World Peace Council. In spite of his advanced age Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboyev readily goes on long trips to visit his fellow-believers in South-East Asia as he is deeply convinced that this "corresponds to the great teachings of the Buddha who propagated peace on earth without any wars and friendship among everyone without mercenary spirit or malice." Taking part in

world conferences of Buddhists Gomboev has met all the leaders of the Buddhist communities of Nepal, Cambodia, Burma, Ceylon, Japan, India, Mongolia, and other countries.

This is about all that I have to say of the impressions of the Ivolga Buddhist monastery. However I had an opportunity to visit another centre of the Buddhist religion—the Aginsk dazan situated in the Aginsk National District of the Chita Region.

This Buddhist temple was built in 1810 by Russian architects with money donated by eight Buryat tribes inhabiting the Aginsk steppe. It is still functioning. It was for a long time famous as a book-printing centre. In the courtyard of the monastery wood carvers cut out texts on special boards, covered the boards with paint and made prints. Tibetan-Mongolian dictionaries, monuments of Buddhist literature and philosophy translated into Tibetan, as well as the original works of Buryat specialists on Buddhism were printed here using the xylographic method. With the development of modern book-printing the monastery lost its former fame.

The Aginsk Buddhist monastery is a fine, white two-storey Tibetan-style building. On the first floor is the big hall where services are held. The hall is decorated with numerous images of the Buddha, Sansaren-Khurdes, pictures illustrating various episodes from the life of the Buddha and his followers, as well as images of other gods such as Maidari. Tsongkhapa, Mañjuśru ("the white old man") and others. A suburgan, in honour of the great Buddha, deeply respected by believers, and the sacred mirror that

The second floor is occupied by the library which contains the Buddhist canon with commentaries, works by Tson-gkhapa, Vasubandhu, Dharmakirti and others. There are also books describing the life of Buddhists in Tibet, India, Ceylon, Nepal, China and other Buddhist countries of Asia. They are chiefly presents sent by the fellow-believers from South-East Asia. In front of the temple there is a traditional censer and a small suburgan. There are several other suburgans and stupas in the dazan.

All the affairs of the Aginsk monastery are managed by a council which consists of representatives of the clergy and of believers. The council is elected at a general meeting of believers and lamas. It is headed by Golsan Zhimba Gonchikov, son of a Buryat peasant, who was born in Zabaikalsk in 1898. At the age of nine he was sent to a Tibetan school where he studied Buddhism. In recent years Golsan Zhimba has devoted himself to serving the Buddhist faith and retired to a monastery. When, in 1963, the prior at the Aginsk dazan Gomboyev was elected Chairman of the Central Theological Administration of Buddhists and moved to the Ivolga monastery, Gonchikov succeeded him.

One of the sights of this monastery is a tree, grown from the seeds of the sacred tree of Bodhi presented to the monastery by Indian Buddhists. Both believers and monks treat it with reverence and take great care of it. Among the Buddhist monuments of Buryatia there is also the Gusinoozersky Buddhist monastery which is now being restored.

Soviet Buddhists have ceaselessly tried to establish friendly relations with the peoples of other countries. Friendship with Mongolian, Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists is based on old traditions, but Soviet Buddhists have had less contact with the Buddhists of India, Burma, Ceylon and other countries of South-East Asia.

A meeting that took place, in the summer of 1956, between the heads of the Buddhist church of the USSR and Narodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia, proved a milestone in the development of international ties of Soviet Buddhists.

Representatives of Soviet Buddhists also took part in the festivities devoted to the 2,500th anniversary of Gautama the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, held in Delhi. The same year a delegation of Soviet Buddhists, at the invitation of the Indian Government, attended a conference devoted to the influence of Buddhism on history, philosophy, literature, art, and culture of the peoples of the East. The sittings of the conference were attended by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, President of India, the late Prime-Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent state and public leaders of South-East Asia. Representatives of Soviet Buddhists also took part in the work of the 4th World Congress of Buddhists in Katmandu. The late Bandido-Khambo Lama Eshi-Dorzhi Shara-pov, who led the Soviet delegation, spoke at one of the sittings and was warmly welcomed by the delegates to the Congress. On behalf of Soviet Buddhists he greeted the Congress expressing his firm belief that all the delegates, being adhe-



INTERNATIONAL TIES OF THE SOVIET BUDDHISTS



rents of the great teachings of the Buddha, would unite in their striving to reach the noble goal of securing peace and happiness for mankind. He also spoke of the life of Buddhists in the Soviet Union.

In Nepal the Soviet delegation visited places connected with the memory of the Buddha and was received by the King and Queen of Nepal. Before leaving Katmandu, Bandido-Khambo Lama Sharapov gave a reception for the religious and public leaders of Nepal and for the Buddhist delegations that had taken part in the work of the Congress.

Everywhere in Nepal and India the Soviet delegation received an exceedingly warm welcome. On returning home, Eshi-Dorzhi Sharapov said:

"We learnt many things about the life of Buddhists in other countries. We shall tell our believers about them. Our chief conclusion drawn from this extremely interesting trip to Nepal and India is that Buddhists of all countries strive to consolidate friendship among the nations.

In June 1957 Bandido-Khambo Lama Sharapov visited Ceylon as a member of the Soviet delegation and attended the session of the World Peace Council held there. Speaking at one of the plenary meetings the head of the Soviet Buddhists greeted the outstanding leaders of the great movement of the peoples for peace who had gathered in that country of ancient Buddhist civilization.

Eshi-Dorzhi Sharapov said that Soviet Buddhists, like their fellow-believers in Asian countries, are deeply perturbed by

the danger of the atomic and hydrogen tests. On behalf of Soviet Buddhists he appealed to believers all over the world to add their voices to those of the millions of people of good will demanding the immediate cessation of atomic tests and the complete banning and destruction of atomic and hydrogen weapons. "We pray," said Bandido-Khambo Lama, "for the happiness and common good of mankind following the behests of our great teacher the Buddha. Let there be peace among the nations!"

When in Ceylon, Eshi-Dorzhi Sharapov visited many temples where he prayed and spoke with prominent religious leaders of Ceylon.

In Kandy, a place of pilgrimage, the head of the Soviet Buddhists received a great honour. The prior of the temple allowed him to carry the casket with the Buddha's tooth, a sacred possession of the temple, outside the temple for the pilgrims to examine it.

While visiting Buddhist religious organizations in South-East Asia the head of the Soviet Buddhists gave donations to meet the needs of Buddhist temples abroad.

Thus, for instance, he donated money to build the Buddhist temple of "Mahiyangana Chattia" in Ceylon, for excavating Buddhist relics in Lumbini, etc.

In the summer of 1958 when Mr. Saranankara Thero, a famous Buddhist leader, member of the World Peace Council, and Mr. Beneragama, Doctor of Philosophy, came to Soviet Buryatia from Ceylon at the invitation of Bandido-Khambo Lama Sharapov, they visited the Ivolga and Gusinoozersk dazans,

After visiting the temples of Buryatia Mr. Thero said: "I have seen with my own eyes the Buddhist temples, the restoration of an ancient dazan, observed the believers freely performing their religious rites."

During the work of the World Congress of Buddhists in Nepal the heads of the Buddhist community in the USSR made the acquaintance of many Buddhist leaders of South-East Asia. Among them was Mr. Malalasekera, representative of Ceylonese Buddhists, who was elected President of the International Fellowship of Buddhists at the Congress.

Soon afterwards Mr. Malalasekera came to Moscow as Ambassador of Ceylon in the USSR. Heads of the Buddhist Church of the USSR and Mr. Malalasekera continued to maintain friendly relations. The Ambassador visited Buryatia where he met and talked with the clergy and the believers more than once.

In November 1959 Bhikkhu Amritananda, President of "Dharmodaya Sabha," the Nepal society of Buddhists, and Vice-President of the International Fellowship of Buddhists stayed in the Soviet Union for a month at the invitation of the Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR. During his visits to Moscow and Leningrad he read lectures on modern Buddhism in Nepal. Mr. Amritananda also visited Volgograd, Sochi and Sukhumi and then went to the Buryat Autonomous Soviet Republic to get a fuller idea of the life of Buddhists in the USSR. While in Bu-

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Buryatia, Mr. Amritananda accompanied by Bandido-Khambo Lama Sharapov, and other Buddhist leaders visited the temples, attended the services, frequently spoke to the believers and visited them in their homes. Before leaving for his native country, Mr. Amritananda expressed his satisfaction with everything he had seen and his warm thanks for the cordial welcome he had received in the Soviet Union.

"The purpose of my visit," said Mr. Amritananda at a press conference, "was to see for myself how things actually stood with religion in the Soviet Union. I have heard many bad things about it. My month's stay in the USSR permits me to draw the conclusion that there are no obstacles for religion and religious activities in the Soviet Union.

I have seen the Orthodox churches, the Jewish synagogues, the Moslem mosques and had the happy opportunity to visit Buddhist monasteries in Buryatia. I myself took part in the service there, talked to the clergy and spoke before the believers. I have no doubts left concerning the existence of religious tolerance in the Soviet Union and the right of every religious community to follow its canons and customs."

Mr. Amritananda visited the Soviet Union for the second time in 1965, this time as head of a delegation of Nepal Buddhists.

In the summer of 1960 the Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR sent its representatives to Burma, Ceylon and Cambodia. The purpose of the visits was to consolidate friendship with the Buddhists of these

countries and see monuments of Buddhism in South-East Asia. During their stay in these countries the heads of Soviet Buddhists became acquainted with the life of their fellow-believers and visited Buddhist holy places. In Burma they handed an invitation to U. Chan-Tun, the then President of the International Fellowship of Buddhists, to visit the Soviet Union as a guest of the Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR. A year later Burmese Buddhists visited the Soviet Union.

At present strong ties of friendship connect the Buddhists of the Soviet Union with those of the countries of Asia. Reciprocal exchange of delegations takes place regularly between the Soviet Union and Japan, Ceylon, Nepal, Burma, Cambodia and Mongolia. The Buddhists of the USSR are welcome in these countries, while Soviet Buddhists, offer their hospitality to numerous delegations of their fellow-believers.

The delegation of Buddhists from the USSR who attended the last (7th) World Congress of Buddhists met many old friends there.

This is what Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboyev, head of the Soviet Buddhists, said of the visit:

"We were greatly impressed by the fact that the conference was held in India, a country of ancient Buddhist civilization, and particularly in the city of Sarnath, where the Buddha announced his immortal teaching for the first time. We are happy to note that the conference was opened by Doctor Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, President of the Republic of India.

"We consider our second visit to In-

dia to have been very interesting and instructive. In spite of the climate which is rather unusual for us, we tried to visit as many temples and monuments of Buddhist culture as possible, for they are as sacred to us as to Indian Buddhists. I will never forget the cordial welcome which was given our delegation both by the Buddhist clergy and the people. We had interesting talks with religious, state and public leaders of India, took part in the services and saw everywhere that the Indian, like the Soviet peoples, are struggling for one common cause which is peace and security. The great Buddha propagated exactly the same ideas of peace and fraternity, friendship and goodness. I have a firm belief that the Buddhists of the USSR and India are following one common course, worshipping the same ideals and, to my mind, there is nothing at present to prevent the successful development of friendship and mutual understanding between the Soviet and the Indian peoples."

At the Congress in Sarnath, Sanzhe Dylykov, representative of Soviet Buddhists, was elected Vice-President of the International Fellowship of Buddhists.

The Central Theological Administration of Buddhists of the USSR intends to extend and consolidate the friendly ties with foreign Buddhist organizations and prominent Buddhist religious leaders of all countries.

Soviet Buddhists are deeply concerned about the aggression of the USA in Vietnam. The fire started by the imperialists has enveloped the whole country, most of whose population profess

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Buddhism. The sympathies of Soviet
Buddhists are completely on the side
of the just struggle of the Vietnamese
people. Recently a delegation of Mongo-
lian Buddhists stayed in our country at
the invitation of the Central Theological
Administration of Buddhists of the USSR.
In their joint statement published in
Izvestia, one of the biggest Soviet pa-
pers, the Buddhists of the USSR
and Mongolia demanded the with-
drawal of American troops from South
Vietnam.

They also demanded that the barbarous
bombing of North Vietnam be ceased.

The many-century old cultural heritage of Buddhism has long attracted the greatest orientalists of the world. Many scholars from Europe, Asia and America devoted their lives to the study of the literature, philosophy, history and art of the Buddhist countries. In Russia interest in Buddhism arose much earlier than in the West. This was because peoples professing this religion lived on the country's southern and eastern borders. I cannot name the exact date when this interest originated, but it is known that in 1716 Peter the Great sent a clerical mission to Peking to study Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism. One of the members of the mission presented the first description in Russian of the Buddha's life. The well-known Russian historian G. Miller also studied Buddhism. Valuable works on Buddhist cosmology, iconography, the life in Buddhist monasteries and the biography of Prince Sidhattha Gautama the Buddha have been written by Russian Academician Palas. Many other Russian scientists also took an interest in Buddhism.

The foundations of Buddhist studies in Russia were laid by Academician Vassily Vassiliyev, one of the most prominent representatives of the progressive trend in Russian oriental research.

Vassiliyev, the son of a clerk, was born on February 20, 1818, in Nizhni Novgorod. At the age of 16 he entered the Oriental Department of the Philological Faculty of Kazan University where he studied the Mongolian language. Vassiliyev studied under O. Kovalevsky, a well-known specialist on Mongolia. On Kovalevsky's advice Vassiliyev took up problems of oriental ideology, Buddhism



**INTEREST
IN BUDDHISM
IN RUSSIA
AND THE USSR**



in particular, which were quite unexplored at the time. Vassiliyev started studying Mongolian sources and soon, at the age of nineteen, was able to, defend his thesis entitled "The Spirit of the Buddhist, Work of Altan Gerela" for his master's degree.

To gain a deeper knowledge of Buddhism, Vassiliyev went to Mongolia, and in 1840 as a member of a clerical mission to Peking where he spent 10 years. In China he mastered the Tibetan, Chinese and Sanskrit languages.

A tireless worker, Vassiliyev gathered much valuable material on Buddhism in Tibet, India and China. He brought with him to Russia the whole Chinese canon of the Buddhist scriptures in translations, extracts and reviews, as well as excerpts from a great number of Chinese and Tibetan books on philosophy and history. On his return to Kazan Vassiliyev became a professor, occupying the chair of the Chinese and Manchurian languages. He did not stay there long however. In 1855 he moved to St. Petersburg. During this most fruitful period of his life, he defended his doctor's thesis "On the Fundamentals of Buddhist Philosophy" and was elected a Corresponding Member, and shortly before his death a Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. His outstanding work, *Buddhism, its Tenets, History and Literature*, was published in 1878 and played an important part in the study of this religion.

Among Vassiliyev's extant works the largest is his *Commentary to Mahavajrapatti, a Buddhist Terminological Dictionary* which gives a detailed explanation of the 9,565 Buddhist terms inclu-

ded in the Makhavjutpatti Dictionary. Also extant are the manuscripts, *Review of the Schools of Buddhist Literature*, *History of Buddhism in Tibet* and the translation into Russian of *History of Buddhism in India* by Tarnatha.

Vassiliyev's works were of great importance for research. His *General Survey of Buddhism* presents in concise form his views on Buddhism and methods of its study, and contains new ideas, daring hypotheses and original interpretations. With the fundamental work of the French scientist E. Burnouf, it laid the foundations of the scientific investigation of Buddhism in Europe.

Vassiliyev died in St. Petersburg on April 27, 1900, at the age of 82. His name is forever connected with the development of Russian oriental study for which he did a great deal.

Vassiliyev's pupil Ivan Minayev, a prominent Russian orientalist, gifted publicist and traveller, continued the investigations started by his teacher. Minayev was educated at St. Petersburg University at the Department of Oriental Languages where Vassiliyev was professor at the time, and it was under his influence that young Minayev became greatly interested in the Buddhist religious and philosophic system.

However Minayev made a path for himself. Russian scientists before him had studied northern but paid little attention to southern Buddhism. Ivan Minayev was the first Russian scholar who may justly be called the founder of a new trend in Russian Buddhist studies, namely, the study of southern Buddhism. He devoted much time and energy to Sanskrit and Pali in which all the an-

cient literary monuments of southern Buddhism are written, as well as to Prakrit and modern Indian languages.

In 1862 after graduating from the University Ivan Minayev went abroad to get acquainted with the works of West-European specialists in Buddhism. For five years he worked in the British Museum, Berlin University, Paris National Library, studying the manuscripts written in Pali. There he had laid the basis of his vast knowledge which later on so greatly surprised his colleagues.

In 1867 after returning to his native country Ivan Minayev published his first work which he entitled *Pratimoksha-Sutra. A Buddhist Service Book. Translated*. The study of this ancient monument of Buddhism was the first of the numerous contributions made by this very versatile researcher. He took a great interest in history, linguistics, Indian folk legends. He considered that legends played an important part in every religion for it was through them that the wide masses for whom philosophical dogmas were inaccessible became acquainted with the religion. The holy books of the Buddhists are also full of legends, the illustrations to which decorate their temples. By carefully studying them Ivan Minayev obtained a deeper understanding of this complex religious and philosophic system.

It was not with the study of legends, however, that Minayev was mainly concerned. His creative work was almost entirely devoted to the study of the history and philosophy of Buddhism. *Buddhism. Study and Materials* is the title of Minayev's major work based on a very great number of Sanskrit and Pali sour-

ces. In this work, he said, he had attempted to give the reader a "general survey of Buddhism in its development." Only one as great as Ivan Minayev could have tackled such a complicated problem as this. The work is a brilliant investigation and a valuable contribution to the treasury of oriental study. It has not lost its significance to the present day. In 1876 he undertook his first trip to Asia, going to Ceylon where he visited the holy places of the Buddhists and monuments of Buddhist art. He also acquainted himself with the sacred monuments of Indian and Nepalese Buddhism. In 1879 Minayev went to India for the second time, and in 1885 he made his third trip to the East. Minayev's travel notes (they were reprinted in the Soviet Union in 1955) are of great interest.

During his travels Ivan Minayev gathered a fine collection of objects of Buddhist culture and art which are carefully kept at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the USSR Academy of Sciences and of manuscripts which are in the Leningrad State Library.

Though an early death (he died at the age of 49) put an end to further interesting writing and plans, Ivan Minayev left behind him more than 130 works. A collection entitled *Materials and Notes on Buddhism* was published posthumously by his pupil Sergei Oldenburg. But Ivan Minayev's main service to Buddhist study was that he was one of the first to attract the attention of Russian and Western scientists to the Buddhist philosophic system.

Sergei Oldenburg (1863-1934) whose name is well known to orientalists

throughout the world was another outstanding Russian and Soviet scholar who devoted his life to the study of the history of Buddhist folk literature and art.

Having finished secondary school with a gold medal in 1881, Oldenburg entered the Department of Oriental Languages of St. Petersburg University where he had the good fortune to study Persian and Sanskrit under such prominent scholars as Vassily Vassiliyev and Ivan Minayev.

Having defended his thesis entitled "A Survey of the Phonetics and Morphology of the Prakrit Dialect Magadhi," and graduated from the University Oldenburg continued to work on Buddhist manuscripts. In 1894 he got his master's degree, his thesis being on the Buddhist Legends ("Bhadrakalpavada-na, Jatakamala").

A great knowledge of Indian folklore helped Sergei Oldenburg to understand the meaning of the pictures on the famous Bharhut stupa and on the monuments of Borobodura in Java. He also studied early Indian folk poetry. Very interesting and important is his work entitled *On the Problem of Mahabharata in Buddhist Literature*. Not less valuable are Oldenburg's works on the deciphering and interpretation of excerpts from ancient manuscripts in different languages found in the sands of Central Asia. His major work in this field is an analysis of the manuscript written in Kharoshti and containing the most ancient Prakrit version of the Buddhist book *Dhammapada*.

In 1897 Oldenburg began a series called "Biblioteka Buddhika" in which were

published many philosophical and religious works of northern and southern Buddhism. Not only Russian, but other very prominent specialists in Buddhism throughout the world assisted in this work, headed by Academician Oldenburg. Up to now more than 30 volumes of this series have been published.

For his services to oriental study Oldenburg was elected Honorary Fellow of the British Royal Asian Society and the French Asian Society. He was also made Honorary Chairman of the Society for the Study of Buddhist Literature in Heidelberg, Corresponding Member of the Berlin and Gottingen Academies and Honorary Member of the Indian Archaeological Institute. During the last years of his life Academician Sergei Oldenburg was Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Near a pine grove not far from the settlement of Borovoye in the North Kazakhstan is a grave with a modest headstone bearing the following inscription: "He explained to his country the wisdom of the ancient thinkers of India." In this grave lies Fyodor Shcherbatskoi who devoted his life to the study of Buddhist culture in India and the Far East.

Fyodor Ippolitovich Shcherbatskoi, son of an officer, was born in a small Russian village on September 16, 1866. Having finished the secondary school in Tsarskoye Selo he entered the Historical and Philosophical Department of St. Petersburg University where he attended lectures on linguistics and Sanskrit by Ivan Minayev. During Minayev's trip to

India and Burma, Shcherbatskoi studied under Sergei Oldenburg. Influenced by these two great scientists he decided to devote himself to the study of Buddhist philosophy for he thought it contained the essence of the highest achievements of Indian culture.

In 1910, he went to India to further his studies of Buddhism. This trip during which he visited Bombei, Calcutta, Benares and other places proved extremely interesting and he always recollected it with a feeling of deep content. His main interest was the study of Buddhist and ancient Indian manuscripts. He spent several months in Benares studying philosophical shashtra under a highly-educated pandit.

Shcherbatskoi's first small work on Buddhism and Indian logic immediately attracted attention. In it he spoke against the assertions of some European orientalists that Indian philosophy was based on that of the Greeks. He sought to prove that "Indian philosophy and logic had developed exclusively on Indian soil and were the result of the independent work of the Indian mind."

A year later Shcherbatskoi published the first part of his *Theory of Cognition and Logic According to the Teachings of the Later Buddhists*. The second part of this work, containing a systematic account of the history and theory of Buddhist logic, was put out in 1909. This Shcherbatskoi's first major work on the logic of later Buddhism received world recognition and was translated into the German and French languages.

Academician Shcherbatskoi's principal works which are considered classics

of Buddhist philosophy, were written after the October Revolution. Among them are *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word "Dharm"* (1924), *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvana*, translations of the first and twenty-fifth chapters of the *Treatise on Relativity* by Nagardjuna and a commentary to them by Chandrakirti.

But the most important and fundamental of Fyodor Shcherbatskoi's works were two volumes of *Buddhist Logic* published in 1930 and 1932. Specialists appreciated this work for the great amount of material used and the skilful treatment of it. About fifty Sanskrit Tibetan Buddhist texts are cited in the *Logic*. On the basis of this vast and valuable material and the investigations made by West-European, Indian, Japanese and Russian scholars, Shcherbatskoi proved that Buddhist logic was "the peak of the age-long development of Indian philosophy" and that it was independent of Greek logic and absolutely original. D. N. Shastri, a prominent Indian scientist, said of the *Buddhist Logic* that it was a remarkable work which not only revealed the hidden treasures of the philosophic school of Dignaga, but also contained a critical investigation of original works by Uddyotakara, Vachaspathimisra, Djayanta, Sridhara, Udayana and other authors. No other scientist could have understood so profoundly the essence of Buddhist philosophy as Shcherbatskoi. Doctor Shastri also said that the Indian people hold sacred the memory of Fyodor Shcherbatskoi and are extremely grateful to his country for producing a man who made such a val-

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uable contribution to the development of Indian philosophic thought. Jawaharlal Nehru in his book *Discovery of India* called Shcherbatskoi a universally acknowledged authority on Indian philosophy.

Though he spent his life in the study of Buddhist philosophy, Shcherbatskoi was also interested in history and literature. He translated from Sanskrit *The Adventures of Ten Princes*, *Panchatantra* and other works. For five years (1931-34 and 1938) he directed a group of young Soviet researchers engaged in the translation of the *Arthashastra* into Russian.

All of his work is permeated with great love for the peoples of the East and their centuries-old culture. Shcherbatskoi was infinitely devoted to science and saw the purpose of his life in it.

Shcherbatskoi was also a brilliant teacher and trained a whole galaxy of orientalists who not only continued the study of ancient oriental philosophy he began, but also created a school which at present plays a leading part in the study of Buddhism the world through.

In recognition of his outstanding work, Fyodor Shcherbatskoi was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Asian Society in London, of the Society of Oriental Studies in Berlin, the Paris Asian Society, and member of other oriental study societies in a number of other countries, as well as Corresponding Member of the Gottingen Academy. No modern book on the history of Buddhism ever fails to mention his name and his work.

Shcherbatskoi died in 1944.

This survey would not be complete if we did not mention the name of Yuri Roerich, one of the most profound specialists of Buddhism in the world.

Yuri Roerich received a brilliant education in Russia and perfected it in London, Paris and America. He spent many years travelling about Mongolia, China, Tibet, Ceylon, Nepal, Burma and India where he visited places of Buddhist worship. The success and scientific value of his numerous works are based on his great erudition and profound personal impressions.

Having obtained complete mastery of six oriental and four European languages and an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history, philosophy, logic, ethics, literature and art of Buddhism, Professor Roerich was able to awaken in his students a deep interest in Buddhism. At his suggestion, a group under his guidance studied the penetration of Buddhism to Ceylon and the countries of South-East Asia, Buddhism of South India on Tamil monuments, the dialectics of the philosophy of Nagardjuna and the creative poetry of Aryashura. He also superintended the publication in the Soviet Union of the Russian translation of the *Dhammapada* from Pali.

Roerich's sudden death in 1960 was a great loss. A research laboratory has been established at the Institute of the Peoples of Asia and named in his honour. His library has been moved into it and there his numerous pupils continue the work he began.

Some other institutions of our country are also engaged in successful research of Buddhism: in Leningrad at the Man-

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uscript Department of the Institute of
the Peoples of Asia of the USSR Academy
of Sciences and at the Buryat Complex
Research Institute in Ulan-Ude.

Buryat specialists are studying Buddhist religious and philosophic literature. The Manuscript Department of this Institute has the world's richest collection—some 30,000 manuscripts and xylographs of Buddhist manuscripts in the Tibetan, Mongolian and the Buryat languages.

The collection includes works of Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist authors and text-books on philosophy. At present the Buryat Institute is preparing a catalogue of its manuscripts, many of which are translations from Sanskrit. The Buddhist canon *Gandjur* in the Mongolian language and 225 volumes of *Dandjur*, with comments to it, are kept here. It is believed that these books contain the works of all Indian Buddhist specialists in every field of knowledge. The *Dandjur* which is a manuscript with beautiful miniatures includes works by Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Dignagi, Kalidasa and others.

Georgi Rumyantsev, Master of History, is the head of the Manuscript Department. Badia Dandaron, Master of Philology, a leading Soviet specialist in Tibetan, also works there. In cooperation with Boris Semichev he has compiled the recently published Tibetan-Russian Dictionary which made it possible to reveal many of the "secrets" of the Buddhist manuscripts written in Tibetan. Besides Tibetan, Boris Semichev has a fine knowledge of Sanskrit and Pali and has translated the *Arthashastra* into Russian.

This group also includes several young investigators who are studying the various sayings, proverbs, fables and epic poems found in Buddhist manuscripts and borrowed by the Buryats from Sanskrit literature. During a visit to the Institute I saw a copy of the *Dhammapada* published at the beginning of this century and translated from the Tibetan by Ochirov, a Buryat scholar. There also exist manuscript translations of the tales of *Panchatantra*, some from the *Garland of Tales* by Aryashura, and *Drops of Rashiyana* by Nagarjuna. All are written in good Buryatian and scientists have agreed that the translations are brilliant.

Orientalists at Ulan-Ude study Buddhist philosophy and history and take an interest in contemporary Buddhism. Those at the Institute have prepared a collection of articles on modern Buddhism based on local material. At present works are being prepared for the press on the dissemination of Buddhism in Central Asia and the study of Buddhist philosophic treatises written by Buryat scholars.

The Mongolian manuscripts are of great interest and include one in Mongolian from the pen of the Indian orientalist Tarnatha. This is an authorized translation of his essay describing an expedition to hell to save his mother. The Institute also possesses a Mongolian translation of Kalidasa's poem *Cloud Messenger*.

Quite recently a Buddhist terminological dictionary entitled *The Source of the Sages* was put out in a translation by R. Pubayev and B. Dandaron. It was compiled in the middle of the 18th century by a board of forty highly educated

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lamas with the view of translating the Tibetan *Dandjur* into Mongolian. This classical dictionary was very popular in the past and served as an invaluable reference book. *The Source of the Sages* has long attracted the scholars' attention throughout the world and its publication is undoubtedly an important event in the study of Buddhism.

The orientalist of Leningrad undertake considerable Buddhist studies. Among them is the outstanding specialist Professor Boris Pankratov, whose perfect knowledge of Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian and several other languages has made him an indispensable expert on Buddhism in different countries. Other experts are Boris Kuznetsov, teacher at Leningrad University, hindologists Eduard Temkin, Mariya Vorobyeva-Desyatovskaya and Leonid Menshikov. Leningrad researchers have concentrated mainly on the study of a unique collection of Buddhist manuscripts and xylographs gathered in the 18th century and now kept in Leningrad, at the Manuscript Department of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The so-called Dunhuan collection brought to Russia by Sergei Oldenburg and other Russian scientists and travellers is an extremely valuable collection of Chinese Buddhist manuscripts, the latest of which date back to the beginning of the 11th century. They may be divided into two groups: those translated from the Sanskrit and original Chinese works. Among the translations, works that had been thought lost were discovered.

In Moscow Buddhism is studied at the Institute of the Peoples of Asia of the

USSR Academy of Sciences by Sanzhe Dylykov, Oktyabrina Volkova, Grigori Bongard-Levin, Yelena Semeka, Alexei Kochetov, Professor of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute, and others.

Nowadays the Soviet school of Buddhist studies is successfully keeping up the traditions of its predecessors. Recently the *Nauka* (Science) Publishing House put out the Russian translation of the collection *Dhammapada*, a classical work of Buddhism translated by Viktor Toporov, and *Djatakamala* by the Indian poet Aryashura in the joint translation of the late Academician Alexei Barannikov and Oktyabrina Volkova, as well as a book by Alexander Vostrikov entitled *Tibetan Historical Literature*. Grigori Bongard-Levin and Oktyabrina Volkova published *The Legend of Kunal* from *Ashok-Avadanamala*, one of the most popular literary works of northern Buddhism. An interesting work was published by Yelena Semeka, Master of History, devoted to the system of management of ancient Buddhist monasteries of Ceylon based on Singhalese epigraphy.

The comparatively recently published book by Alexei Kochetov entitled *Buddhism*, which is about the part modern Buddhism plays nowadays, appeared in a large edition and aroused the great interest of specialists and the lay reader.

Works on history and philosophy by Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, S. Chatterdjee, D. Dutt, M. Roy, M. Singh, A. Banerjee and other Indian authors have played an important part in acquainting the public with Buddhism.

The work of such prominent Soviet

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archaeologists as S. Tolstov, A. Yakubovsky, A. Bernshtam, M. Gryaznov, A. Belenitsky and others who discovered Buddhist monuments after the style of the Ghandhara in Khoresm, Pyandzhent, the Chui Valley and Termez have won world renown.

Summing up, one can safely say that the achievements of Russian and Soviet orientalists in the study of Buddhist philosophy equal any in the world. Soviet scientists treat the rich cultural heritage of Buddhism with the greatest care. Translations and investigations of Buddhist writings have helped reveal the distinctive history and culture of the countries of the East.

Buryatia, Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, in the south of East Siberia and south-east of Lake Baikal, is a land of vast open valleys with great snow-capped mountain ranges, dense forests and vast natural resources. The Republic occupies an area of 351.4 thousand square kilometres, which is almost as big as the territory of Japan. Its population is about 700 thousand people.

From time immemorial this rich but stern land was inhabited by the Buryats, nomadic stock-breeders, who lived in smoky felt tents and drove there herds from one encampment to another, from spring and summer pastures to autumn and winter ones. Sometimes when changing pastures the shepherds passed hundreds of kilometres through the steppes without meeting a living soul on the way. Every day they had to put up their tents and take them down again, to load and unload their horses, to protect their cattle from wild animals, from the severe winds and cold. It was particularly difficult in winter when the pastures were covered with a thick ice-crust, and also during the summer droughts when the steppe turned into an ash-grey desert.

But it was not only the severe climatic and natural conditions that made the Buryats' life so hard. The feudal lords, the tribal elders, merchants and tsarist officials robbed and oppressed them.

Poverty accompanied the Buryats from the cradle to the grave, from generation to generation. The older inhabitants of the Buryat settlements still remember those terrible times. "The past is dark



A STORY OF SOVIET BURYATIA

as night. We lived in our native steppe as if it were a foreign country. Day and night we went on toiling for the rich," they say.

Life changed in Buryatia with the advent of Soviet power. Agrarian reform was carried out in the Republic as a result of which millions of acres of fertile arable lands, meadows and pastures were nationalized and turned over to the working peasantry free of charge. Comfortable new settlements attached to collective and state farms took the place of the old nomad encampments. The Buryats started to lead a settled life.

Industrial development has been still more spectacular. Before the Revolution some 1,500 workers were employed in the few small enterprises. A quarter of a century ago the first industrial enterprise of Buryatia, the Ulan-Ude locomotive-repair works, was built in a dense pine forest on the outskirts of the city. In following years many other large industrial enterprises were built.

At present Buryatia has a highly-developed coal industry—the Gusinozersk coal mines that provide the Republic with fuel. The output of the mechanized glass factory in Ulan-Ude is known not only in the Soviet Union, but also in China, Korea, and Mongolia. The woolen mills in Kyakhta depend on the Republic's collective and state farms for supplies of wool.

The number of power stations is rapidly increasing and the chemical industry is developing at a high speed. Building materials enterprises, machine-

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building plants, and the foodstuffs industries are equipped with the most up-to-date machinery. The highly developed timber industry, the mining of gold, molybdenum, tungsten and some other minerals has put Buryatia among the advanced Republics of the Russian Federation.

Soviet Buryatia has a free medical service which employs about 10 thousand medical workers. Every small settlement and village has its own hospital. Recently a large hospital was built in Ulan-Ude.

Occupying two four-storey buildings it has medical, surgical, neurosurgical, ophthalmic and physio-therapy departments. From here at any hour of the day doctors fly by plane or helicopter to remote places to visit people who have fallen ill.

Much has been done in the field of education. Formerly a land of almost complete illiteracy, Buryatia has nowadays compulsory eight-year schooling, its own technical colleges and institutions of higher learning. At present more than 19 thousand specialists with a higher and secondary education work in Buryatia. Among them are scientists, teachers, agriculturists, actors and cultural workers. Only some forty years ago settlements existed where there was not a single literate person, while at present at every collective farm there are specialists with higher education.

Soon after the establishment of Soviet power a scientific committee was set up in Buryatia which some time later was reorganized into the Institute of Culture and then into the Institute of History and Philology. This institute had the

task of training personnel for the Republic.

In 1958 the Siberian branch and the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences adopted a decision to set up a Buryat Complex Research Institute. The USSR Academy of Sciences gave Buryatia an opportunity to send its gifted young people to post-graduate courses of Moscow, Leningrad, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk and other Soviet cities. The government of Buryatia built a new laboratory for the institute while the USSR Academy of Sciences granted it an annual subsidy of one million roubles for the first few years. The institute is as well equipped with Soviet and foreign apparatus as the research institutions of Moscow. There is a laboratory of molecular physics which conducts research in the physics of solids, a radiophysics lab, biochemical lab and others. Actually the institute has everything it needs to conduct research in such fields as geobotany, soil science, physics, chemistry, geology, literature, history, sociology and many others.

The average age of the over 300 scientists who work at the institute is thirty-five. The young age of the scientists does not mean that their qualifications are low. They have among them five doctors and about fifty masters of science.

Mention should also be made about the cultural development of the Republic. The Buryat Opera and Ballet Theatre opened in Soviet times enjoys great popularity in the Soviet Union. It often goes on tours to Moscow as well as to other Union Republics. The Buryat Drama Theatre also presents interesting productions. The State Ensemble of Bu-

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ryat Songs and Dances and the local
Philharmonic Society also produce a
very good impression. In Ulan-Ude there
are also choreographic and music
schools. The local department of the
Writers' Union has forty members. Sev-
eral papers in the Republic are pub-
lished in the Buryat language and the
radio and TV programmes are also con-
ducted in Buryat.



A UNITED FAMILY

I want you to make one last visit with me, to one of the numerous kolkhozes (collective farms) of Buryatia and see how the farmers live.

More than 5,000 kilometres separate Moscow and the "Communism" collective farm in the Ulan-Ude District of Buryatia. It takes eight hours to fly by jet plane from Moscow to Irkutsk, the centre of Siberia. From here one boards a small two-engine plane and an hour's flight over Lake Baikal brings one to Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Buryat Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, surrounded on all sides by cone-shaped mountains. A two-hours' trip by car to the Mongolian border and one finds oneself at last close to the collective farm in question.

We didn't plan to go to this particular farm. The Buryat comrades who helped me to arrange the trip wanted me to see another collective farm, better developed and more prosperous, but they could not get in touch with its chairman who had left home early in the morning. So we went to the "Communism" collective farm.

It unites three villages, two Buryat and one Russian. Collective farming was started here as far back as 1929, when twelve families formed the agricultural cooperative "Unyn." Up till 1953 each village had a collective farm of its own to which almost all the villagers belonged. In 1953 the three collective farms united and formed one big collective farm which they called "Communism." At present the "Communism" farm numbers 398 families, i.e. about 1,400 people. The state secured for them in perpetuity 60,000 acres of land free of

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charge, 25,000 acres of which are pastures, 12,500—arable lands, approximately the same number of acres—woodlands, 7,750—meadows and the remainder—personal gardens and orchards.

The main occupation of the farmers is stock-breeding. The five livestock departments have 1,700 head of cattle, and 12,000 sheep in 30 flocks. There is also a poultry farm with about 5,000 birds.

The "Communism" kolkhoz grows wheat, maize, barley, oats, peas and vegetables—potatoes, cucumbers, cabbages and carrots. In 1965, the collective farm received 620,000 roubles of profit from the sale of its produce; 70 per cent of this sum came from the sale of milk, meat and wool.

At present the kolkhoz has 15 trucks, one milk wagon, two cars, 36 tractors of different makes, 7 self-propelled combines, 6 tractor-drawn combines, seeders, mowers, automatic drinking troughs, etc. To keep all this machinery in order there is a repair shop equipped with lathes and milling machines.

The farm's management board headed by the chairman directs all the work. Both the chairman and the nine board members are elected at a general meeting for a term of two years. The general meeting considers all major problems. At present the collective farm board consists of a stock-breeder, a section-leader, an economist, a manager of the dairy farm, a machine operator and four rank-and-file collective farmers. Attached to the management board is a book-keeping office which works out the farmers' wages and pays them.

Such a big farm as the "Communism" kolkhoz must have specialists. On its

staff it has three stock-breeders, two veterinary surgeons, two agriculturists with a higher education and several mechanics and technicians with a special secondary education.

Every collective farmer receives wages of 70-80 roubles monthly. The milkmaids and shepherds get from 100 to 120 roubles. As two or three people from every family work on the farm, the income of each family is from 200 to 250 roubles.

Besides the collective farmers have plots of land attached to their houses (about 1.5 acre) on which they grow potatoes, cucumbers, cabbages and other vegetables. A collective farmer's family may keep three head of cattle, eight sheep, a pig with piglets and any number of chicken. The limit is set by the collective farmers themselves at their general meetings, therefore for each collective farm the figures are different.

To provide feed for these privately-owned cattle the management board allots from 1.5 to 2 acres of meadows for hay-making. In summer the cattle graze on the collective farm pastures. As well, three per cent of all fodder stored by the collective farm is distributed among the farmers as additional payment.

I visited some of the collective farmers. They live in spacious wooden houses of two, three, or four well furnished rooms, which are very clean, and have radios and electricity. The chief mechanic, the agriculturists, the veterinary surgeons, the teachers and book-keepers have telephones. Among the private property of the farmers are 2 cars, 86 motorcycles, 32 TV sets, many washing-machines and vacuum cleaners. Near every

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house are cowsheds and barns for grain and potatoes. Some farmers even have a summer cottage.

Eighty-seven new houses have been built on the farm over the last three years. If a farmer wants to build a house he can get a loan of 1,000-1,500 roubles from the collective farm. He has to pay this back in instalments over 3 years. Besides the farmers may use trucks and building materials free of charge. All this serves to encourage extensive housing construction.

When I visited the "Communism" collective farm preparations were under way for elections to the Local Soviets that were to be held all over the Soviet Union.

The Local Soviets play an important part in the life of the people. At the head of the three villages joined in the "Communism" collective farm there is a Village Soviet. Twenty-five villagers are elected to it for a term of two years. Only two persons, the chairman and the secretary, are appointed permanently.

Trade, medical services, preservation of law and order and a number of other problems are under the authority of the Local Soviets. In the "Communism" collective farm these problems are solved in the following way.

There is a small hospital in the village with a doctor, two assistants and a nurse. In case of serious illness an ambulance takes the patient to the district hospital. Some seven miles from the village in a picturesque spot on the shore of a lake there is a holiday home which accommodates 30 people at a time. The holiday home is open from the beginning of May to the middle of

July when work at the farm has not yet got into full swing. The holiday makers have four meals a day and if necessary they can take mineral baths. It costs them a rouble a day, the rest of the expenses being met by the collective farm.

The collective farm has two food-shops, three stores that sell both food-stuffs and manufactured goods and several mobile shops that serve the farmers directly in the fields and pastures.

Twenty-five fully trained teachers staff the eight-year school where 320 children are enrolled.

There is also a House of Culture at the collective farm which I liked very much. It has a library, recreation rooms and a hall to accommodate 300 people where concerts are given and films are shown. Usually there are two shows: one in the afternoon for the children and the other in the evening for the grown-ups. The films change quite often. The local inhabitants told me that films produced by countries of the East, as well as Indian and Japanese films, are especially popular. There are 9,000 volumes with new books being constantly added in the free library of the House of Culture. Young people come to the House of Culture to take part in amateur performances, to attend dances and have a good time.

Recently a scientific expedition of the Buryat Complex Research Institute conducted a detailed examination of the living conditions of the collective farmers. Here are some of the interesting conclusions at which they arrived. Not a single crime has been committed during the last three years and not a single person from the collective farm has been

put in prison. There is even no militia there. Order is observed by the volunteer public order squad headed by Nikolai Dombayev, Chairman of the Local Soviet. The other public organizations are the Society for the Preservation of Nature, the Women's Soviet, the Soviet of Pensioners and the Comrades' Court.

The communist and Komsomol¹ organizations of the collective farm jointly produce a weekly radio programme which is broadcast over the local studio and is very popular. At first the collective farm managers sum up the work that has been carried out during the past week and set the most important tasks for the week to come. Then specialists take the floor and give advice on how to organize this or that business better. Advanced workers share their know-how. If something was criticized in the previous programme, the listeners are informed of the measures that have been taken to correct the fault. Idlers and those who don't do their bit are criticized, the collective farm news are announced and then a concert programme usually follows.

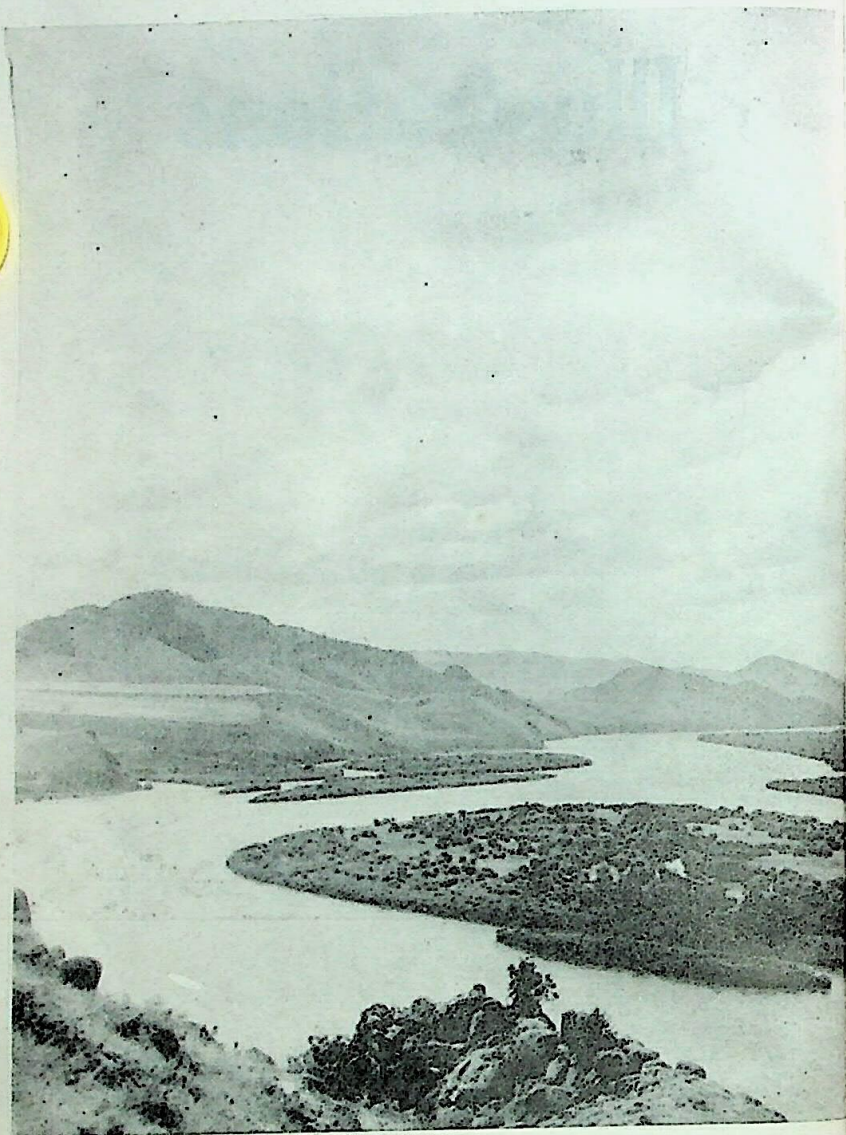
I spent two days at the "Communism" collective farm and I can say that the people there are prosperous and lead interesting lives.

It is only a little over forty years since Buryatia became an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. This is a very short period in the history of a people, but the achievements of the Buryats in the building of a new life show what can be done when the people

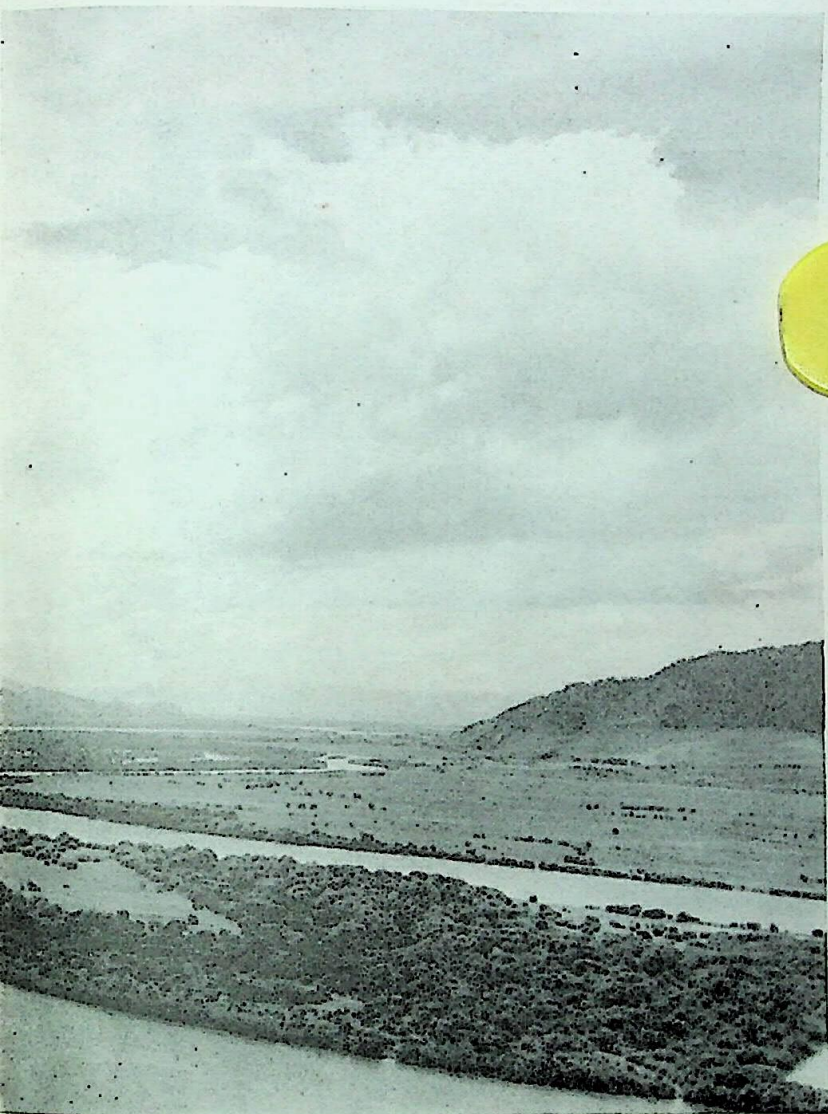
¹ *Young Communist League.*

Such is Soviet Buryatia, a part of whose population professes Buddhism. The Buddhists of the USSR live as one family with the whole Soviet people. They do what they can for the development of Buryatia which becomes stronger and more prosperous every year. By taking part in the socialist life of the country, the Buddhists actively support the struggle for peace in the world, for friendship among nations.

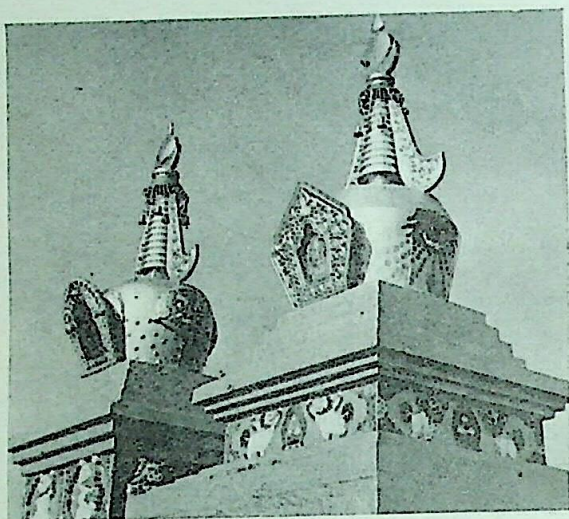
Illustrations



Wide stretches of Buryat land.



Stupas of the Ivolga Buddhist monastery.

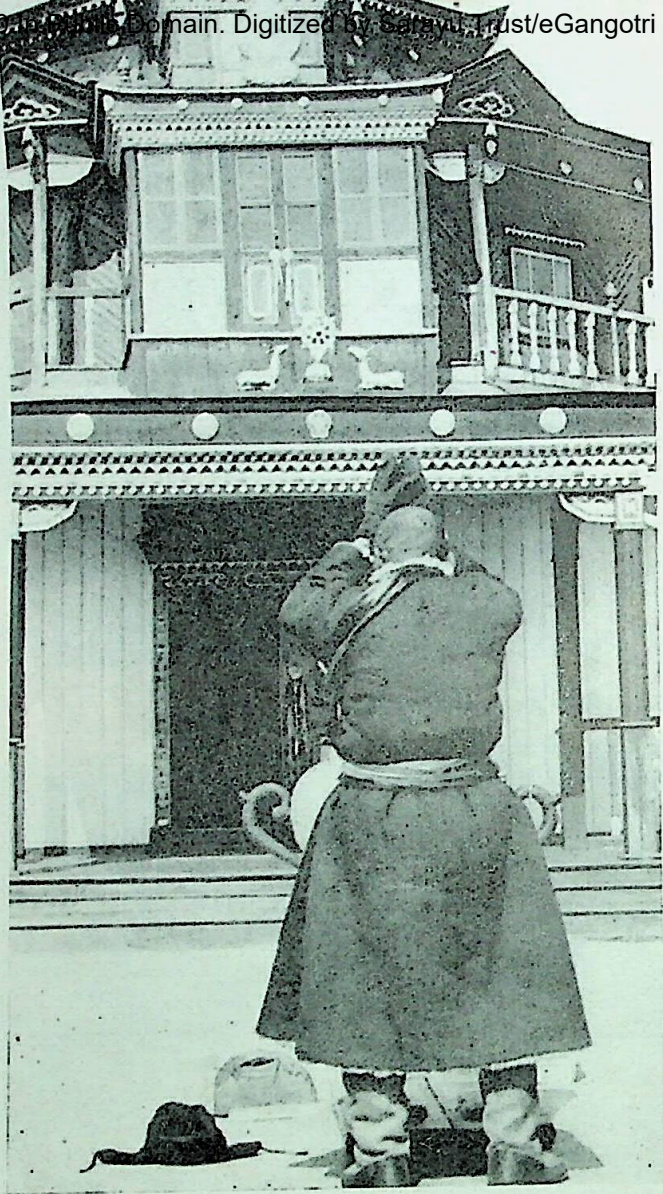




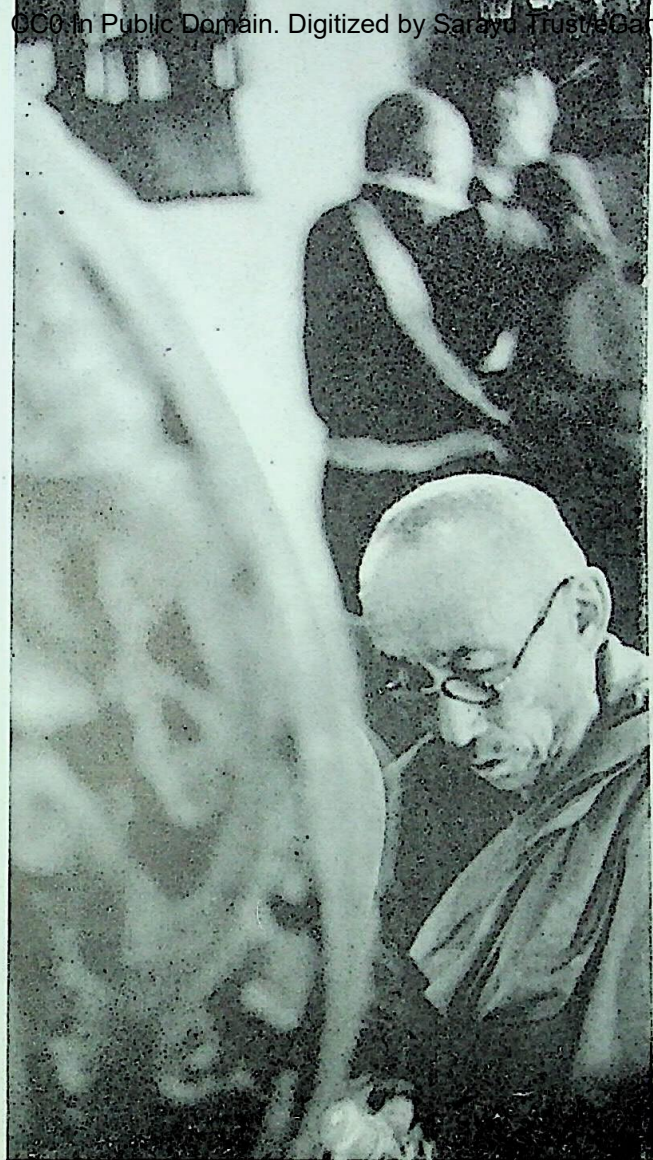
Lamas announce the beginning of religious ceremony.

Monks in front of the temple.





Believer in front of the temple.

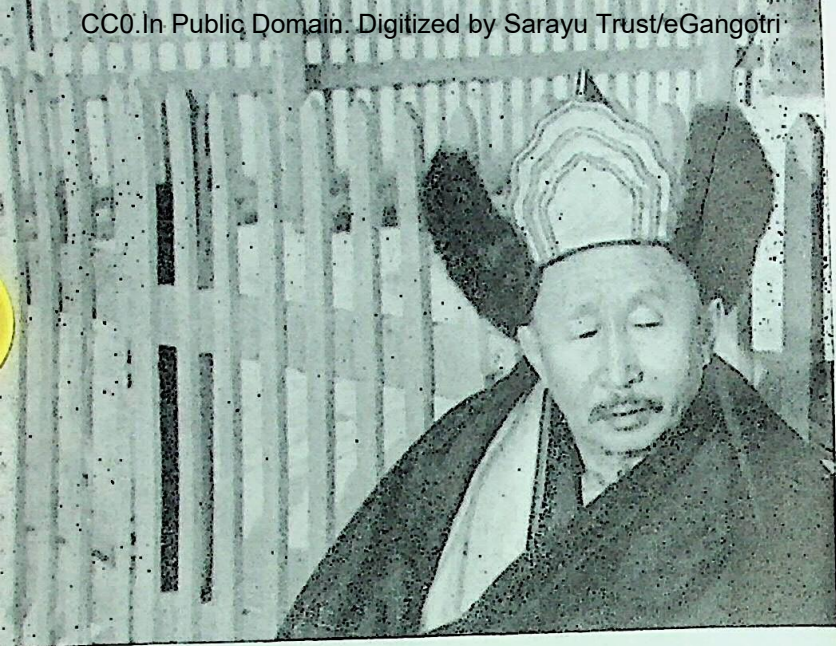


Inside the temple.





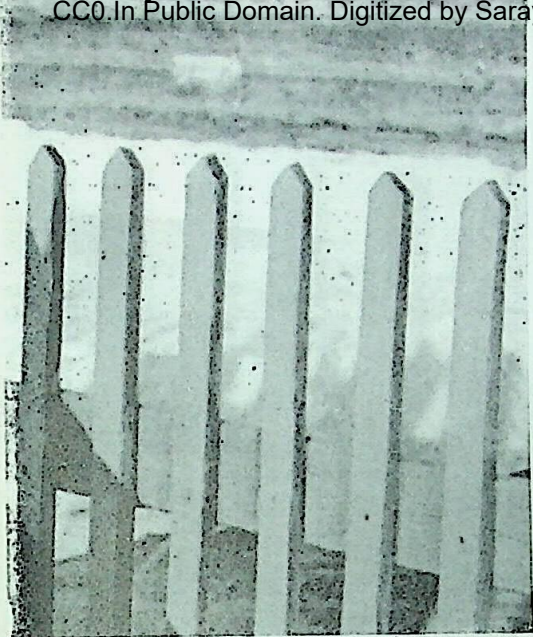
Monks of the Ivolga Monastery reading prayers.

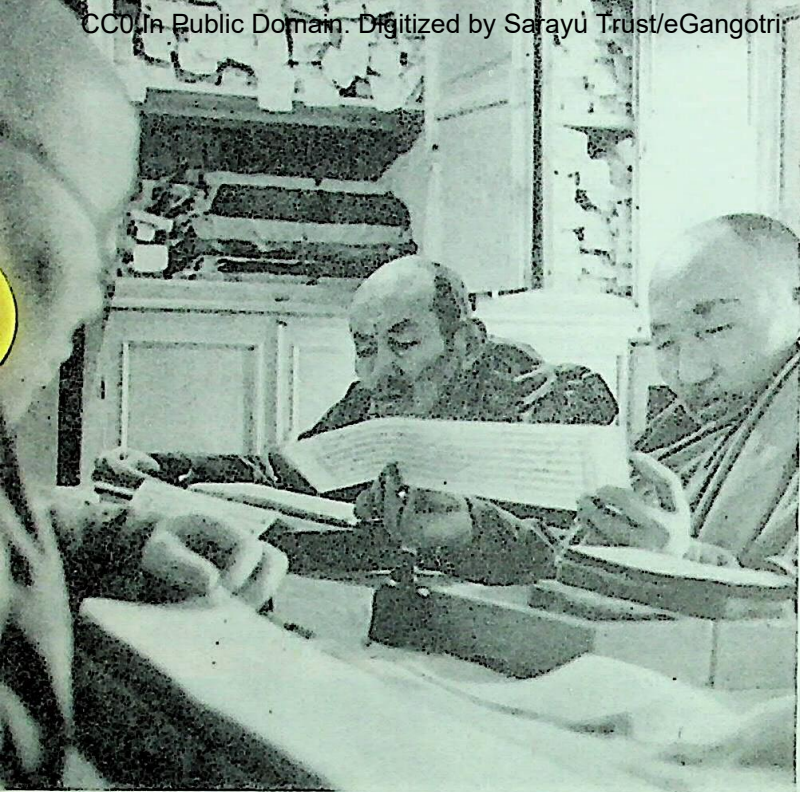


Bandido Khambo Lama
Zhambal Dorzhi Gomboy-
ev, head of Soviet Budd-
hists.



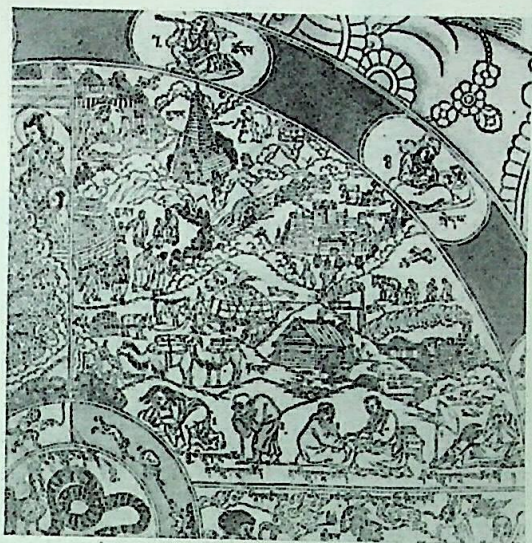
Lamas and believers leav-
ing the temple...





Buddhist library in the Ivolga monastery.





Fragments from Buryat Buddhist books.





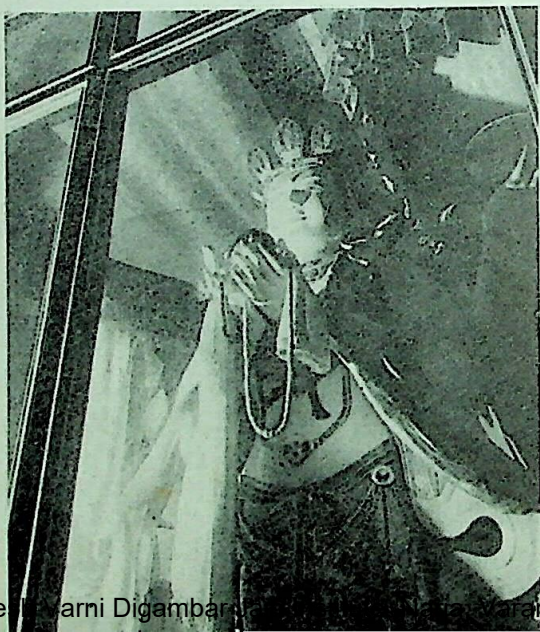
Buddhists in the USSR have broad international contacts. Fellow-believers from Asian countries are their frequent guests. Amritananda, a leader of Buddhists in Nepal, addressing the believers in the Ivolga monastery.

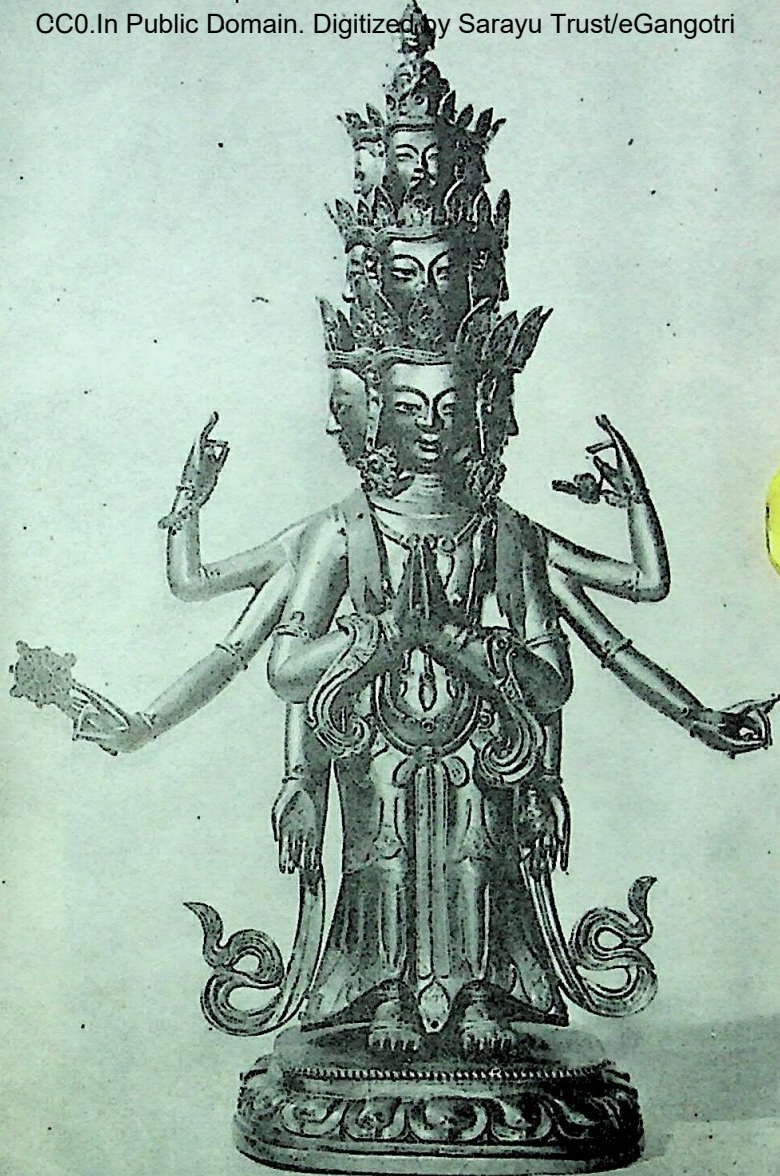
Meeting an honourable quest.

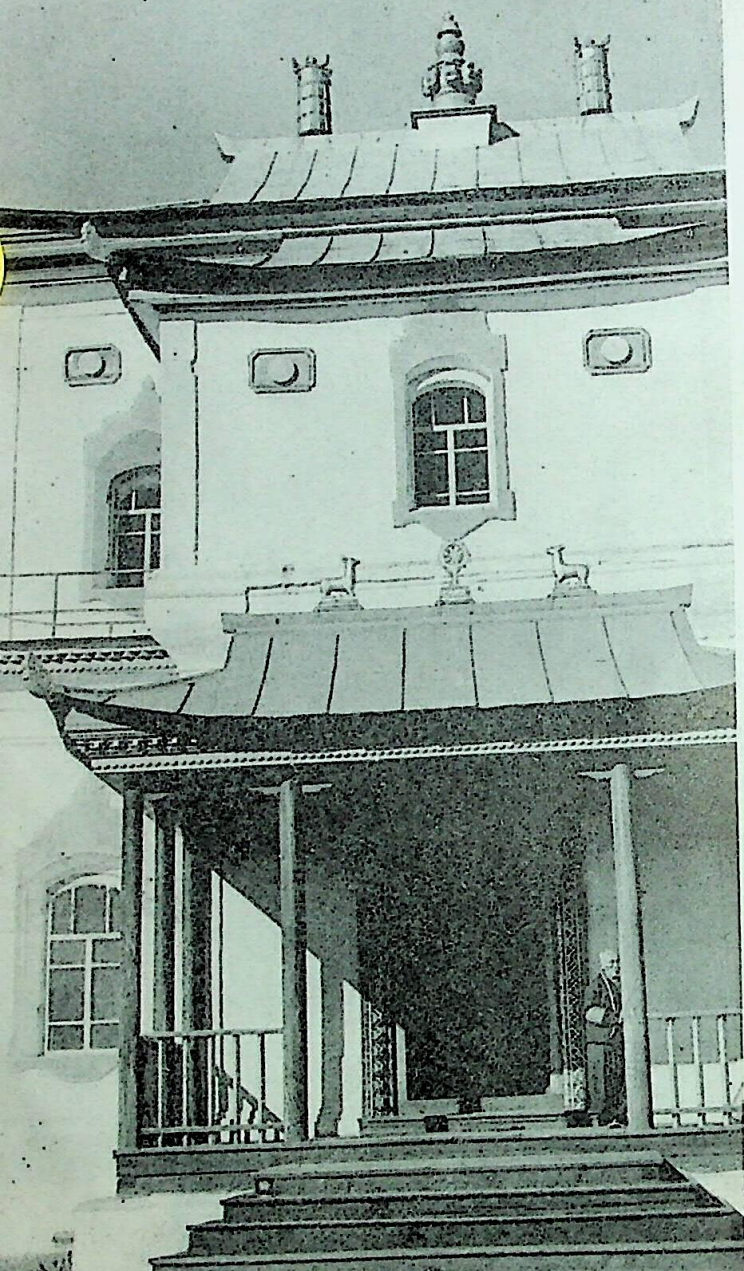




Gods of the Buddhist pantheon piously preserved in the Ivolga monastery.









Golsan Zhimba Gonchikov,
head of the Aginsk Budd-
hist monastery.

Delegation of Buddhists
from Ceylon visiting the
Soviet Union at the invita-
tion of their brothers in
faith.

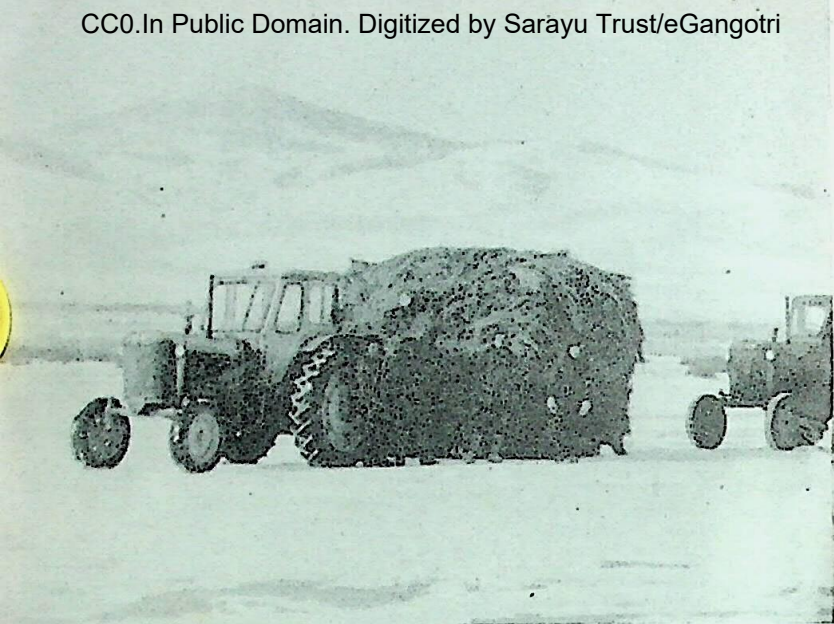


Aginsk dazan.

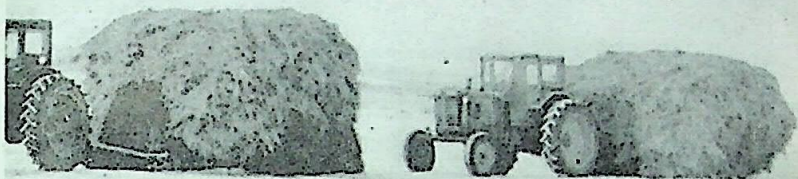


A Buryat village.





Ganesh Varni Diganwar Jain Institute, Naria, Varanasi

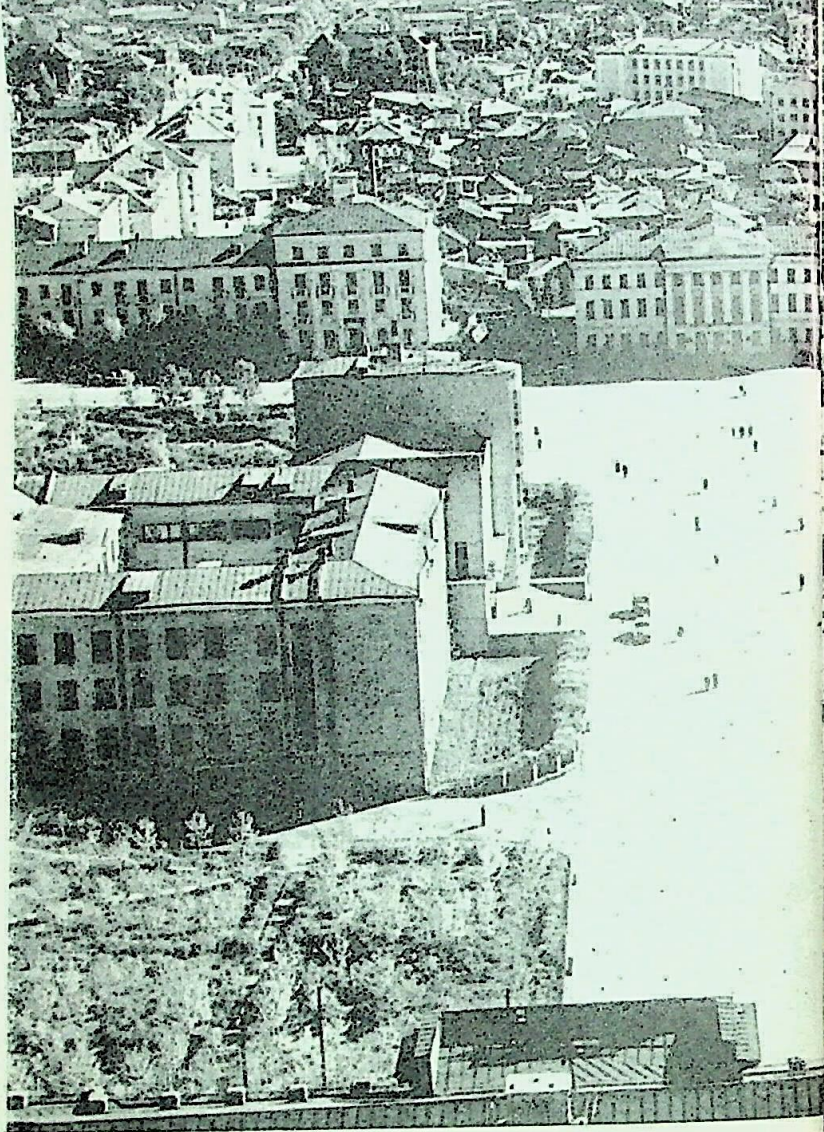


Hay-making on a Buryat collective farm.

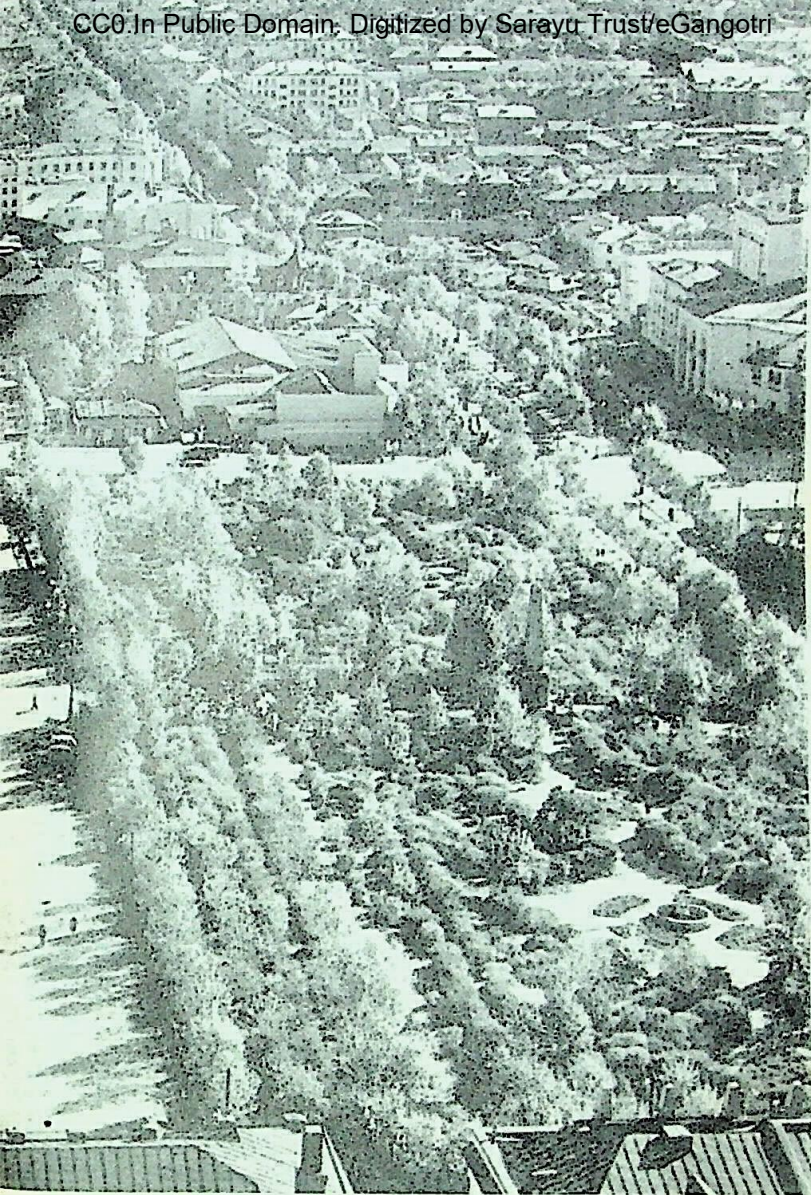
A collective farm club.

A village clinic (Buryat Autonomous Republic).

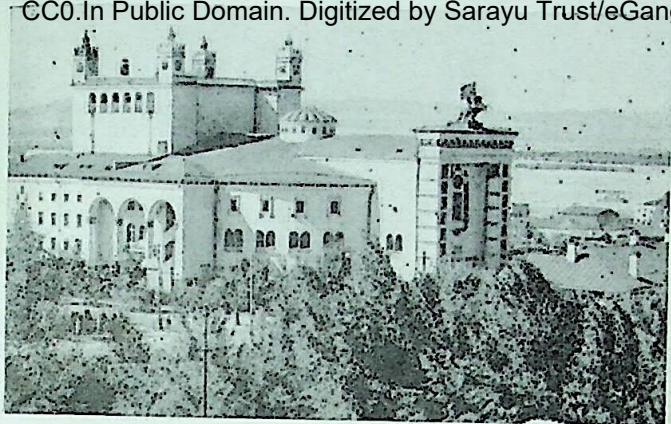




Ulan-Ude, capital of Soviet Buryatia.







Buryat State Opera and Ballet Theatre. Ulan-Ude.

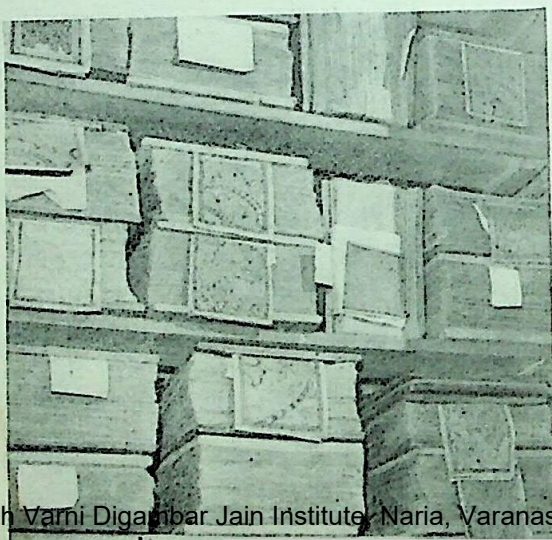
◀ Scene from the "Flowers of Life,"
a ballet by Zhigzhit Batuyev, Buryat
composer.

"Nadon" humorous dance, per-
formed by a Buryat student amateur
dance ensemble.





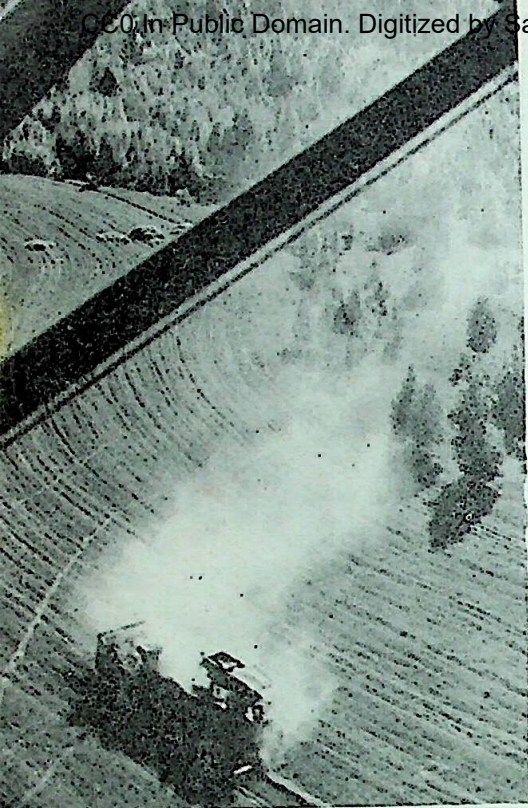
**Mongolian Ganjur in the
Buryat Complex Research
Institute.**



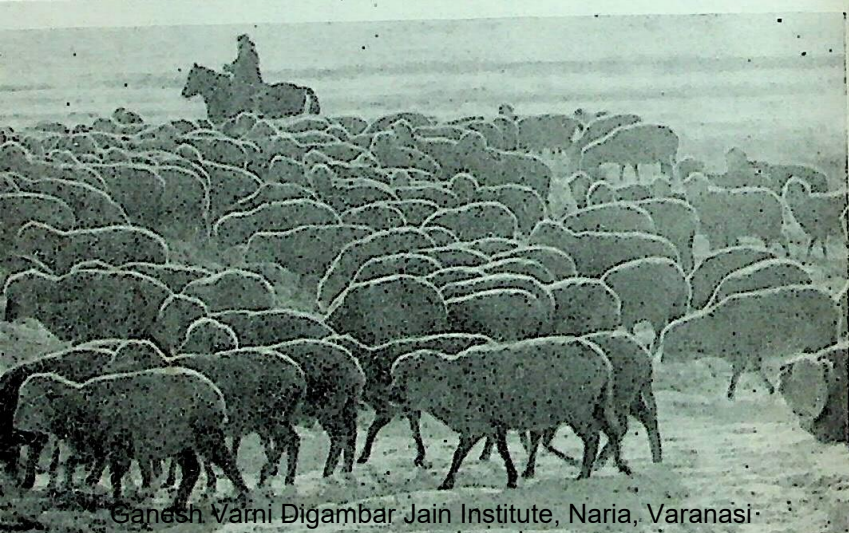


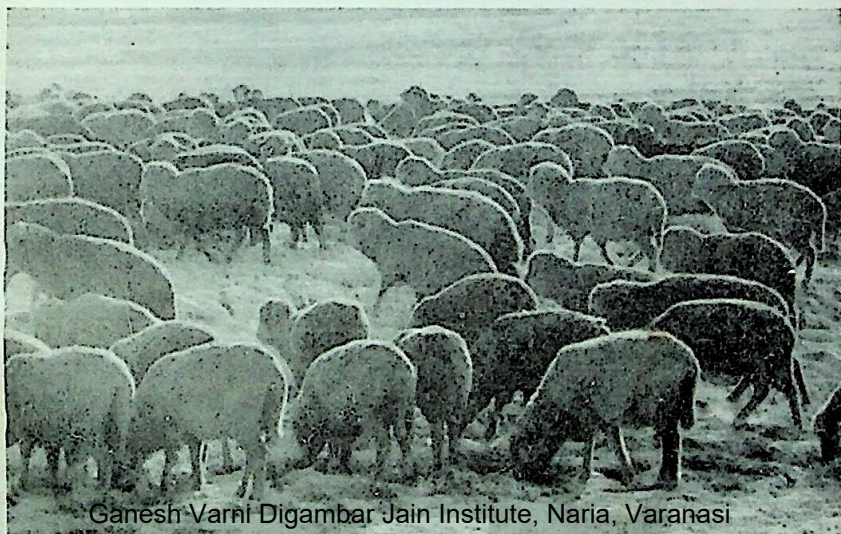
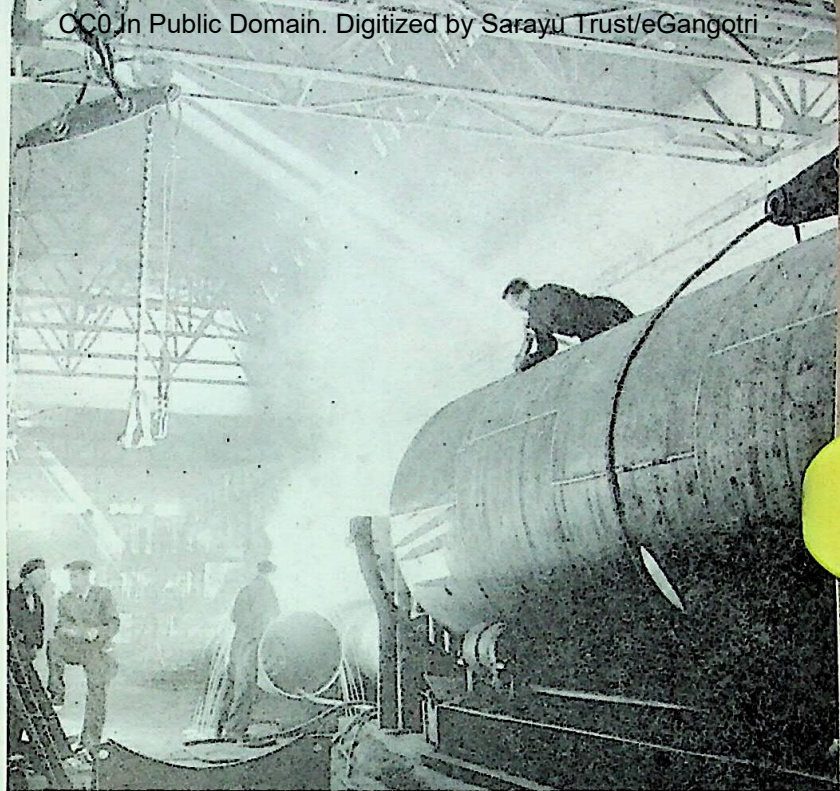
Kseniya Gerasimova, research worker, reading Buddhist manuscripts.

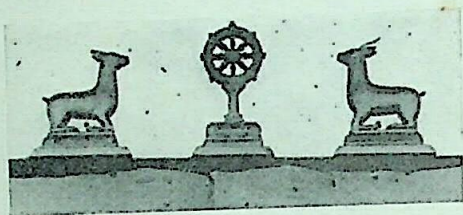
Buryat virgin lands.



Buryatia is famous not only for her cattle. The Republic also has a well-developed industry.







Н. ЕРМОШКИН
«БУДДИЗМ И БУДДИСТЫ В СССР»
на английском языке
ЦЕНА 28 КОП.

